

Serial No.: 10/602,525

REMARKS

Applicants respectfully request reconsideration of this Patent Application, particularly in view of the above Amendment and the following remarks. No additional fee is required for this Amendment as the number of independent claims has not changed, and the total number of claims is less than twenty.

Request for Telephone Interview

Applicants kindly request the Examiner to contact the undersigned at (847) 490-1400 to schedule a telephone interview, to discuss the merits of this Patent Application.

Amendment to the Claims

Applicants amended Claim 1 to clarify the claim language.

Applicants added new Claims 18 and 19. Support for new Claims 18 and 19 can be found, for example, at page 3, first and second paragraphs, and at page 6, third full paragraph.

No new matter has been added to the claims by this Amendment.

Claim Rejections - 35 U.S.C. §103

The rejection of Claims 1-5, 7-12, and 14-17 under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as being unpatentable over Jacobs et al., U.S. Patent 6,516,640, in view of Bartels et al., U.S. Patent 6,539,756, is respectfully traversed.

The Examiner has not established a proper *prima facie* case of obviousness. The Examiner has not put forth a proper suggestion or motivation for combining the cited references. Furthermore, the combination of the cited references does not provide all claim limitations.

The Examiner says the Jacobs et al. Patent does not disclose “a switching element that emits a signal when the blocking piece reaches the locking position ...” (Office Action, pages 2-3). The Examiner applies the microswitch 10 of the Bartels et al. Patent to the device of the Jacobs et al. Patent. The Examiner explains how he would incorporate the microswitch 10, but does not provide a suggestion or motivation why it should be done. The Examiner simply and insufficiently states the two devices are in the “same field of endeavor” (Office Action, page 3).

One skilled in the art would not have found any suggestion or motivation to apply the microswitches of the Bartels et al. Patent to the device of the Jacobs et al. Patent. The Bartels et al. Patent uses a pair of microswitches 10 and 11

Serial No.: 10/602,525

in combination with a pair of electric motors 8 and 9, respectively. The microswitch 10 signals when the steering wheel lock 28 is moved into position (See Fig. 3) by the electric motor 8. As the Jacobs et al. Patent does not incorporate such electric motors, one skilled in the art would not have any reason to incorporate the microswitches of the Bartels et al. Patent.

Furthermore, the combination of the Jacobs et al. Patent and the Bartels et al. Patent does not provide every claim limitation of Applicants' Claim 1. Claim 1 recites that the blocking piece (24) is moved from the locking position into the opened position by a solenoid and that the blocking piece (24) is movable out of the opened position into the locking position by a manually operable operating part (40). The Examiner incorrectly says the Jacobs et al. Patent discloses these limitations of Claim 1.

The Jacobs et al. Patent discloses an electromagnetic solenoid actuator 18 for moving an armature 22, which acts on a pawl 20 and the pawl's engagement portion 50,54. The solenoid both extends and retracts the armature 22 (Col. 4, lines 25-29), thereby both engaging and disengaging the engagement portion 50,54 to block/unblock the lock bolt 14. The Examiner cites Col. 8, lines 61-65, as teaching moving the "blocking piece" into the locking position by a manually operable operating part. However, the manual disengagement of the pawl 20 is disclosed as

Serial No.: 10/602,525

an alternative to, or a substitute for, the solenoid actuator 18. The Jacobs et al. Patent does not disclose using a combination of a solenoid and a manual disengagement lever. The Bartels et al. Patent discloses electric motors, and does not make up for these deficiencies of the Jacobs et al. Patent.

The combination of the Jacobs et al. Patent and the Bartels et al. Patent neither discloses nor suggests Applicants' claimed invention, which recites a blocking piece (24) that is moved from the locking position into the opened position by a solenoid and movable out of the opened position into the locking position by a manually operable operating part (40). Therefore, Applicants' claimed invention is patentable over the Jacobs et al. Patent and the Bartels et al. Patent, alone or in combination.

For at least the above reasons, Applicants respectfully request reconsideration and withdrawal of this rejection.


Conclusion

Applicants intend to be fully responsive to the outstanding Office Action. If the Examiner detects any issue which the Examiner believes Applicants have not resolved in this response, Applicants' undersigned attorney again requests a telephone interview with the Examiner.

Serial No.: 10/602,525

Applicants sincerely believe that this Patent Application is now in condition for allowance and, thus, respectfully request early allowance.

Respectfully submitted,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Mark D. Swanson', with a stylized flourish at the end.

Mark D. Swanson
Regis. No. 48,498

Pauley Petersen & Erickson
2800 West Higgins Road, Suite 365
Hoffman Estates, Illinois 60195
(847) 490-1400
FAX (847) 490-1403